

Birth of White Buffalo Calf

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CBC Online: Last updated May 24 2005 04:10 PM MDT - FORT ST. JOHN, B.C. ? The birth of a rare white bison ? the odds of which are said to be one in 10 million ? is creating some excitement on a ranch in North Peace Country. Spirit of Peace, a white bison (Photo courtesy Blatz Bison Ranch) The owners of the Blatz Bison Ranch, in Fort St. John, just across the Alberta border in British Columbia, say the white buffalo calf was born prematurely on April 17.

calgary.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=ca_buffalo20050524 Native legend holds that the white bison is a harbinger of peace and unity.

In that spirit, owner Karen Blatz has named the male calf Spirit of Peace.

"To them, a white buffalo is a symbol of hope, rebirth or unity, and also peace. And because he was born north of Peace River, we thought Peace would be a good name," she said.

The calf is being fed from a bottle, and Blatz said that may have to continue for several more months. She said he was only nine kilograms at birth, half of a newborn bison calf's typical weight.

The calf started feeding from bottles shortly after his birth as he was having trouble getting milk from his mother.

Blatz said she was stunned when she saw the young creature for the first time.

"It was almost like we couldn't believe our eyes. We know how rare it is and we thought, how can this be on our farm?" she said.

Blatz said the calf will remain under her care for several more months, but she is considering selling him.

"We would definitely consider selling him. It could be to the native Americans, or even if a circus or a zoo wants something rare to put in there ? to draw the crowds. That would be good too, but he definitely needs more exposure than where we live," Blatz said.

The calf is already drawing attention from curious neighbours and the media.

One authority on white bison believes only 19 others like Spirit of Peace have been born in the past 70 years.

Blatz attributed the odds of the birth, one in 10 million, to the National Buffalo Association.